



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

#### BASIC DATA FOR HUNTING LAWS REVISION COMPILED

Assembling data essential to the annual revision of Federal regulations governing the hunting of migratory birds, the Fish and Wildlife Service today reported favorable conditions on the continent's wildfowl breeding grounds this Spring. The Service estimated that about 100 million birds returned to the nesting regions this year.

Although the activities of the Service have been streamlined to conform to the national war program, the collection of data on migratory birds has been continued as a responsibility placed upon it by Congress.

Estimates of the numbers of birds were based on the January 1942 inventory, one of an annual series used by the Service as a yardstick with which to measure success and determine future needs in administering this natural resource. The inventories have been taken since January 1935, the low point of the "duck depression" when the numbers were estimated at less than 30 million. Like the previous inventories, the 1942 check-up indicated general increases.

"This report of a once seriously threatened resource that has increased annually and tripled in 7 years shows the beneficial results of sound management," declared Service Director Ira N. Gabrielson. He pointed to regulatory action reducing the annual take by sportsmen and to the establishment of 178 refuges of more than 3½ million acres as the two outstanding features of the waterfowl restoration program.

Numerical gains were noted in the inventory for all species of ducks except the black duck of the East, which appeared to be "slightly less numerous" than in January 1941. Special attention was called to the fact that "the canvasback, the redhead, and the ruddy duck, whose future seemed very dark only a few years ago, now exist in numbers that under wise management should assure their status for the future."

"Impressive gains" were also reported for the wood duck, which last year was added to the list of shootable birds for the first time since the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918. Despite a take by hunters in several States last fall, the wood duck now is probably more numerous than during any spring in the past decade, according to the indications of the January inventory.

(over)

Satisfaction was expressed over reports on the snow goose and also those on the Atlantic brant, which now seems to be almost as numerous as before the shortage of its favorite food, eel grass, which occurred some years ago.

The numerical status of other geese is not as satisfactory. Reductions noted in blue geese numbers, it was said, may reflect nothing more than an unfavorable 1941 nesting season on the Arctic breeding grounds, but a similar situation for the Canada goose "is not to be so lightly considered." Exceptionally heavy kills in a few localities in 1940 were thought to be "probably responsible for reducing the population of the Canada goose to a level from which the species has not yet recovered."

The status of the white-fronted goose showed very little change, while a loss was recorded for the cackling goose.

Whistling swans are continuing to increase in numbers, the inventory indicated